

Native American Oral Histories: Marvin Marine

57:40

<TAPE BEGINS MID-SENTENCE>

MM: ...and when my cousins moved away, then they would send one of us up to live with one cousin or another cousin. And, uh, that's how we spent our childhood days, except for when I started working. And I stayed working.

EM: Where did you live when you lived in Sacramento?

MM: In Oak Park.

EM: And the address?

MM: 2727 Santa Clara Way. We lived there for, well, I lived here for 37 years, and we lived in the house for 40 years. It was close to, and it was, yeah, 40 years. 'Cause my brother, he was 2 or 3 years old when we moved out here, from Quincy.

EM: And your relationship to Marie Potts?

MM: She was my grandmother.

EM: And she's the one who owned the house?

MM: No, my mother was the one that bought the house. And, well, it's kinda funny because when she bought the house, she was 18 years old. And she couldn't buy it because she wasn't twenty-one. And so my Uncle John Grey, he had to co-sign. And they put it in his name. And they never went through the change of, getting the ownership changed around until, I guess until about 1960, or so, that my mom got it changed in to hers. It's kinda odd.

EM: Could you tell me something about Marie Potts? Um, her background?

MM: Well, she was a pretty busy lady. She, uh, let's see, well, she started the Smoke Signals, or helped carry it on, it was her daughter that started it.

EM: And the daughter's name?

MM: Josephine. Or wait, let's see, she had five daughters, I think. The oldest was Josephine, then Beryl, Jean, Pansy, and the last one was Pumpkin, or Kittie. Pumpkin was her nickname. But, yeah, and Josephine started the letter. It was a newsletter, it was a newsletter at the beginning. And then when Josephine got married to Johnny Grey, they moved to Nevada. And then my grandmother was in California. And they were all, went to, uh, they went to Stewart. And then from Stewart, they went to, uh, Sherman. And then...

EM: The daughters?

MM: The daughters did. And my grandmother would work on, uh, Lake Almanor, when she was... and she made money and sent it to 'em. And then she'd save so much that she'd get a bus down to, uh, Riverside to see 'em. And, uh...

EM: Your grandmother's Maidu?

MM: Um hm.

EM: Was your grandfather Maidu also?

MM: He was Konkow. Uh, Hensley Potts was his name. And I seen him three times. I was, uh, three years old. And that was in, what, '49. He came to Sacramento, and put himself in the hospital, and I guess about three months after that he, uh, passed away. So, that's the only time I ever seen him.

EM: So, your grandmother was working to send money to her daughters.

MM: Um hm.

EM: She stayed...

MM: She moved away from Hensley. Hensley stayed up there because he wouldn't move to the city for nothing. He was an outdoorsman, mountain man.

EM: Why did she move to the city then?

MM: Well, she uh, her and Hensley didn't get along. And I guess that was their way of a divorce. And I don't really know if they had a marriage license.

EM: But why would she move to Sacramento?

MM: Uh, she didn't want to stay in the same town as him. <laughs> Or the same area, anywhere close to him. I guess it was the way of, you know, of getting away from him and letting him know it, or, vice versa, whatever...

EM: What did she do when she came to Sacramento?

MM: She, uh, she lived with my mom. And my mom was the only one that could put her up, 'cause the rest of the daughters were, oh, having their problems. And a lot of big families and all, and uh... 'Course Josephine, she lived in Nevada. All the rest of them lived in California. And my mom was in the process of buying the house, and so she asked my grandmother, you know, if you want to live here, you can. And so, she just moved in with my grandmother, I mean, with my mom. And she babysat us, after we all, you know, come along.

EM: So you were close to her.

MM: Yeah. Yeah, real close.

EM: She was the lady who helped found the Federated Indians of California, right?

MM: Yeah. Mm hm. That's right, FIC.

EM: And, when was that?

MM: I don't know... Back in 1951.

EM: This was after she came to Sacramento?

MM: After she came to Sacramento, yeah. She had gotten together, and... She got to know some people, where my mom worked, at the BIA office, when it was up on 2nd and J Street, I think. I think it was J Street. Anyway, and my grandmother would go up and visit with her at lunch and all, and she'd meet these various Indian people. And eventually, they got together and started talking. And so they decided, well I guess we're going to start an Indian organization. So there wasn't any Indi-, Indian organization in Sacramento, before she decided, "Well, let's just start the Federated Indians of California." And, so they did. A bunch of people got together. They, they had elections. And I think that first meeting they had, they had all of twelve people I think, or maybe more. I don't know, I'm not sure. At least, you know, I don't remember.

EM: Where did they meet?

MM: They met at the house, our house. Either that or they'd meet at, uh, Oak Park Library, or they'd go to Clooney Clubhouse, or they, they'd uh, get a school, ask to use the auditorium in the evening. And they'd, the YWCA. And they would more than gladly settle in to whatever, use any conference room.

EM: Do you remember what was important to them in the early years? Um, were there political issues that they were...

MM: There, there was. But, um, the thing that they.... They were trying to keep, uh, their reservati-, uh, Rancherias intact, and not be terminated. And, as it turned out, they lost the Rancherias. And, Indians were given their land, that they were living on. But then times were so hard for the Indians, to adjust to the society and all, that they had, turned around, they sold their land and everything that they had. And they became part of the society. And, as it turns out, they weren't wanted in society. Stepped on, you know, general feeling. But it was, uh, that was one of the things. And then they were trying to get some recognition for the Indians, in California, I guess, and... I think she was, she was, uh, trying to get it passed so that the Indians would be, you know, part of society, and be accepted. And, you know, like, back in, what, 1953, they passed a law where Indians could come in to bars. And <inaudible (8:40)> most of the other times, they'd have to go around the back. Either that or Mexicans, or they'd pass themselves off as Mexicans, and go in the bar. But the Indians weren't allowed in bars, until '53. It's funny.

EM: Did they have cultural activities also?

MM: Oh, yeah. They had, uh, various tribes that lived around, had their own cultural traditions, gatherings and all. And uh, I guess something, uh, where she's from, which is, uh, Amador County. Is it Amador County? Plumas County?

Unidentified male voice: Plumas County.

MM: They had their Bear Dances. And she was, you know, she participated in them. She remembers 'em when she was a kid. But when she moved down here, she kind of lost, well, she got away from it. You know, it was too far, she didn't drive. And when she did get her license, she couldn't keep her home. She got her license when she was 63, I think. And, took her, it took her four times to get licensed. She went, she went to the Motor V here. She got turned down three times here, failed her driving test 'cause she'd go around corners too fast, she hit a car. The instructor just told her, "Stop. I'm taking the bus home." <laughs> It was funny. So, eventually, she, she finally got smart and she went up to, uh, Quincy, and got her license up there. She said, "Well, if I can't drive right in the city, I'll go up to the mountains. I know

how to drive up in the mountains.” <laughs> So, she went up to Quincy. That’s where she got her license. But she drove all the way up there. Or did she? No. I think she had uh, Marvin, Potts, that’s my cousin, and she raised him, but he took her name, Potts, instead of his mother’s name. And so, I guess he, he drove her up there, I think. Somebody drove up there with her. I can’t remember, but she got her license up there. Might have been her, her daughter, uh, Beryl, that drove her up there. And she got her license up there.

EM: Now, did, did the Smoke Signals come as an outgrowth of the Federated Indians of California?

MM: The Smoke Signals started before the Federated Indians. And after the FIC started, then they were, the people from FIC were state-wide. And they would call, and, either that or they’d write letters with information. And then she would put the information, you know, whatever was given to her, into the Smoke Signals. And then, the publication increased, and years went by, and, and then... She put out two publications a year. Every three months? Or is that four? It would be four publications. It was what? I think when it started out it was a dollar, dollar and a half, to get a year, year’s subscription. And people in the FIC and in the community, Indian community, you know, that knew about this, Smoke Signals and all, they’d come over to the house and say, “Okay, it’s Smoke Signal time,” you know, and everybody would gather at the house. And my mom, and, and maybe ten or twelve people, would come over. And you’d hear typewriters going, and in the one bedroom, in the one, no, office, Federated Indians’ office, FIC office, as the sign said... We weren’t allowed in it when we were kids. But, come Smoke Signal time...

Unidentified male voice: Mm, hm.

MM: ...we were in there. Either running the mimeograph machine, cranking the handle, you know, by hand, and learning to do publication. I think we were, or I was, about five, six years old. And I’d stand on a stool because my arm would get tired from cranking the mimeograph machine, ‘cause I was too short. And so I’d get a chair, and I’d stand on it, and it’d be more, easier on my arm. And I’d sit there, and I’d crank it with one arm, and then shift to the other arm, and then I’d crank with both arms. And then my grandmother said, “well, go take a break”. And I’d just jump off the chair, and run in there, and lay down on my bed for a while. And then figured, “Oh, that’s enough.” I’d jump up and run back in, and she’d be standing there cranking. And everybody else would be busy typing, cutting stencils, uh, preparing, uh, addresses, getting their little card catalogue box out, or whatever, you know, little file cabinet...

Unidentified male voice: Yeah.

MM: ...and start uh, typing their, uh, addresses on, uh, slips, you know. And they’d go through and they’d have, you know, they’d have so many to do, there’d be so many publications to go to Washington, the State of Washington, Washington. And she made sure that everybody in the Legislature and the Senate and in Congress, they got complimentary issues. And she would send everybody <inaudible> a copy of the Smoke Signal, just to let ‘em know. And then eventually, she got around to where, uh, they were uh, she was sending ‘em to, uh, Indian Reservations, complimentary, and then in turn, they would send information back to her. And then, you know, they’d just trade news. And then, they got bigger and bigger, and more Smoke Signals, more subscriptions, more work, more licking of the stamps... <laughs> We’d stay up until one-, two-o’clock. We’d start in the morning, maybe about seven, eight. People would come over to have coffee and donuts, eat breakfast, you know. They’d fix, my mom would fix breakfast for them, and they’d come over, come wandering in. Maybe, you’d have five people one time, and then at noon, maybe they would have to go home, and take care of their kids, you know,

feed 'em, get 'em lunch, you know, and then another group of people would come in, another five or six, whatever. And they'd come in, just, right after lunch. They would break from 12:00 'til one. That was lunch time. And people that had to do something, run home and stuff, they'd run home, do what they had to do. And they'd come back. And, I don't know, people just, they enjoyed it. It was something to, uh, you know, to be involved, and get everyone else involved with the Indian doings and what have you.

EM: Can you name some of the other people who would be there on those days?

MM: Yeah, there's Bert Norton, Bertha Stewart, Winnie Howe, Emma Fontine, and Paiute Davis, names Gerald Davis, but call him Paiute. Uh, there's, let's see, well, myself, my brothers, Droke Diggins, Elizabeth Paddy, uh, Bertha Tripp, Sam Tripp, mmm... And then, after a while, there's some, uh, students, from Sac State, come over and help, type. After my mom passed away, they didn't, she didn't have nobody to type except Mom. And her, she was one of these self-taught typists, with the two fingers, and ch-ch-ch-ch, that's all you heard, little two fingers going at it. And she'd often say, "Gosh darn it, typewriter don't have a *stale*. <laughs> She hit the wrong key or something. She'd <inaudible>. She'd be talking to herself, and she'd read over what she's doing, tear the paper outta the typewriter, throw it away, start all over again. And then she'd correct herself on the, on what she had written down, and what she wanted to say, and I don't know, she was just something else. She made you laugh all the time, though. It was fun, 'cause she, you know, she enjoyed herself, doing that.

EM: What was her educational background?

MM: Uh, she went to Carlisle, back to Philadelphia. She finished, uh, I think it was the eighth grade. And, while she was back at Carlisle, she was, uh, she was, uh, she worked in a restaurant and in the home, taking care of... She was a maid, I think. And when she first went to Carlisle, she was five years old. They, her mom had, I guess somebody had said, "Well, why don't you send her to school?" And her mom said, "Okay." And she remembers riding in the buckboard. Where did she go? From Almanor, I think she went to Oroville. They rode in the buckboard. Took her, what, three days. And her brother, Uncle John, and her sister. I think Nette was her sister's name. They all went together. And John, I think John was, Uncle John was older, he, couple years older two or.... He was seven?

Unidentified male voice: Or nine?

MM: He might have been nine. And she was five, six years old. And her sister was like two. But when they got there, in, uh, at Carlisle, which is in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh? Philadelphia? Philadelphia, right? What's the state? Yeah, Philadelphia? No, Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania! Yeah. <some of this may be a conversation with the other man.> Anyways, when she got there, they, you know, cleaned them up. And, you know, give 'em a bath and stuff like that, start 'em off right, and issued them clothes. So, Uncle John, he took her in there. And she walked in to this one room, and they had this bathtub there. And she, uh, the only thing that she ever knew that a pot was used for was to cook something in. And she, they took her clothes off and she ran out of the room, she was running down the road, and her brother, Uncle John, had to get her, tried to bite. He took his coat off and he had to go back and tell her they were going to give her a bath and not cook her. <laughs> But she was, she stayed there until she was, uh, fourteen. She came back home, and, I guess, took care of her mom, and worked on, uh, on Lake Almanor. 'Cause, uh, she was born at Big Meadows, which is at the bottom of Lake Almanor. So, then she and her husband, Hensley, and her mom passed away. So, they got married, and they were running

a fishing resort. They had a resort back there on the lake. And they'd take people out fishing. And then after my mom and Aunt Syl were old enough to take fishermans out, they'd take fishermen out, and show 'em where to go fishing at. And they'd go hunting, and they'd take people out and go bear hunting, I mean bear, yeah bear, deer hunting. People would make reservations to come in and ask 'em, "Where's a good place to go?" She'd tell one of the girls, "Take 'em over so-and-so." And other people'd come in, you know, they'd fly in. Either that, or, you know, with a boat. They'd coming flying in, either that or they'd drive in. This is back in the 19-, let's see, my mom was born in 1920?

Unidentified male voice: Yeah.

MM: and they were, uh, they'd go out hunting. And these people'd come in and ask 'em, "Where's a good place to go?" and, "Could we, uh, could you get us a guide?" And then she'd say, "Yeah. Which one of them girls you want to take with you?" And they'd say, "Well, we don't want a girl. We just want a guy." And she'd say, "Well, that's your guide." 'Cause she, she had a boy, but he passed away when he was about just five months? Six months? He had tuberculosis, I think, can't remember. But his name was, uh, Melvin. And, uh, that was the only boy she had. All the rest was girls. So that's where she ended up, and that's what the kids did, tour guides, I guess, they were hunting guides.

CM: Were there other Maidu around?

MM: Oh yeah, there was other Maidus, and Wintuns, and Hat Creeks. She told me one time, that, uh, when she was in Susanville, her uncle was playing hand games, and he bet his wife, and he lost his wife. And he, <laughs> that was to the Wintuns, or Hat Creek Tribe. And then, the following weekend, they went up to Hat Creek, and he won his wife back but he lost his cow. <laughs> So, he was just, you know, I guess he was doing all right, I guess. 'Cept with losing your cow and getting your wife back, you know. She was telling me that lot of her relatives would go out and do that, bet their wives, their house, their cows. But they never bet their kids. They always kept their kids. You know, kids I guess were something special to them. You know, they could do away with their wives, their husbands. It was mainly the men that, uh, did the gambling. Women just sat in the background, just hangin'. You know. That's all they were supposed to do, I guess, I guess. I don't know.

CM: Were they treated, were they treated well by other people up there, in those days?

MM: Uh, well they had to because they were the, the majority back then. There was hardly anybody living up there. Until, 'bout 1930s. Then everybody started moving. The loggers, well the loggers were there. And then the mills started up, and, I guess, with all the gold. I don't know if they had gold up there or not, at the fishing resort. The town started getting bigger, more kids. Second and third generation coming along, you know. Towns always grow, so... But they, they mainly had their way. They didn't have to worry about fighting with anybody. And, they'd also go see my Grandpa cowboy. And she'd go along. And she'd be the cook. And they, they were kinda neat, just old photos we have. He had the big, furry chaps, all of 'em did, the sheeps-, sheepskin, weren't they? Yeah! And they had photos of all these, about twenty of them, all lined up. And they'd get their picture taken. And here they are all standing there with the big, big cowboy hat and chaps, and she'd be standing there by her wagon, with her cookin' pots and pans, you know, so... <laughs> I often thought that that's how she got her name, 'cause she was the cook and always around pots.

CM: Do you know where they did this cowboying?

MM: It was up in Quincy, and over to Susanville, Honey Lake area, and Chester, and Westwood. You know, they'd just all get together. It'd be all the ranchers, and then, I guess the Indians, you know, they would work for ranchers, you know, go out and work, and that's how they worked, I guess. Just, you know, working on the farm and the ranches. And they all gathered up and , "Well, it's time to go gather up cattle." And branding time, so they'd all get together and go out. You see it on TV with a bunch of cowboys going somewhere. There they were, back in the '20s I guess. I guess it'd be about the '20s, '18, 1918, '15, I guess, it's, uh, it's neat, looking at pictures like that. But I don't know what happened to 'em. That's the only thing wrong.

EM: Talking about the Federal, er, Federated Indians again, they held, they supported dancing, here?

MM: Oh yeah. They had, Federated Indians of California was mainly a community orientated organization. That's what their name, that was their basic feeling. Or, what is it, uh, purpose for the organization. That, and to let other Indians know what, you know, what's going on. But their main purpose was to help, like a community service organization. And, with their dancing and stuff, they would find, uh, certain families having a rough time with their bills. They would hold a dance to give them so much money, to help them pay for their, either their needed clothing or food and stuff. And they would, uh, you know, hold a dance, and give the family so much money, to help them with, uh, with their financial problems, maybe.

EM: Where'd they hold these dances?

MM: It was held up in, uh, at the VFW Hall in Bryte. And they'd hold dances on 21st and C Street. There's a little hall over there. They'd hold, uh, dance at uh, the, in Florin, at the Filipino VFW Hall. And they'd hold dances in Elk Grove. But, they'd, they'd hold dances in various places...

EM: How many people-

MM: ...or wherever they'd get the hall. And there'd be, approximately, there'd be, you know, everybody affiliated with the FIC would show up, plus they'd have friends that would come in, and, they'd easily have two- or three-hundred people there. And then, most of the time, they'd have, uh, a Indian dance group there. And they would put on, the Indians would put on their show. Their dance group would put on their hour, half hour show, whatever. Along with, just a, you know, an Indian time. You know, you just go out and dance, and if you don't get tired, then dance some more. So, uh...

EM: You were describing the dancing.

MM: Oh yeah, we, we'd dance. I remember then, uh, the dances and stuff, where... I remember when I was five, they put on dances, and then I, that's when I actually started to dance, Indian dance. And it wasn't a choice. It was a, <laughs>, it was chance, no choice. So, anyway, we would hold dances. And, uh, and they would give the, like, little dance group we had, we would put on our little half hour to hour show, and then everybody else... They'd have a band there. They'd rent a big, rent a band, or, you know, have a record player. You know, record hop. They would stop the band, take a break, and then we'd come out and do our Indian dancing.

EM: What kind of dancing would you do? Was it Miwok or Maidu or?

MM: Well, it was a, sort of a mixture. Miwok, and Plains, and little bit of Washington State Indian dancing. And, there was variation. We had all kinds of dances, different tribes, various tribes. But, uh, I think the main one that I liked was, doing was Miwok dancing, and, uh...

EM: Why's that?

MM: Well that's, you know, they, I guess that's more Californian than, you know, I'm more Californian than I am Plains or out of state Indian.

EM: Are you, you yourself are Konkow Maidu?

MM: No, I'm a *Maida*.

EM: A *Maida*.

MM: Yeah, it's Maidu *Maida*, it's correct pronunciation, *Maida*. But I'm *Maida* and *Oholone* <written as he pronounces it>. My dad was *Oholone*, my mom was *Maida*, so... And *Oholone*'s Coastean <also as pronounced>, that's what they tagged them with. But he was *Oholone*, and he's from, uh, San Jose. And, uh..

EM: So, you're Californian.

MM: Mm hm. I'm strictly Californian. And I was, uh, I was raised *Maida*, and I was taught Miwok dances, because we lived in Sacramento, born and raised here. And, you know, you didn't get a chance to go up and learn *Maida* dancing, and tradition, at all. But I was taught to speak the *Maida*, and think *Maida*. But then I was also taught Miwok dancing. But, you know, it's, er, turned out pretty good because later on I, when I grew up, I had this behind me. Where a lot of Miwoks, a lot of them to the south, don't even know anything about their own tribe, let alone their tradition or culture or religious beliefs.

EM: Were there traditional uh, foods, *Maida* foods that you would eat then, if you...?

MM: Oh, yeah. She, well, my grandmother, she taught us that, you know, when you get something, if it's steaks, you don't say, "Yuck," or "Wow, that stinks." Because a lot of times, I have said that, and I've gotten a, uh, swat. Well the same thing she said if I cried about food or anything. Because, she used to, when people got sick in our house, she would take some roots, put 'em.. We had a wood stove in our house. And she would take these pieces of roots and cut a button off, or, take a little piece, about the size of a pencil, and put it on the burner and let it burn. And, boy did it stink. I mean, it smelt terrible. But, first time I ever found out, er, first time she burned it, I come walking in the kitchen, and said, "Wow, does that stink!" And wacko, that's when I got a lecture. So I didn't say nothing bad about nothing no more. And even if it was bad, I didn't say nothing. Even now. I don't go around saying, "Wow, something stinks," or, you know, I'll go in somebody's house and you know <whispered sounds>, behind her, and ever since then, she taught me that. No more, I'll never say anything bad. I'll keep to myself, or I'll talk to myself and say it, but I won't say it to anybody else. <laughs> I've been cured (?), and my cousins learned it too, 'cause I told 'em one time, "Let's go in the kitchen, quick!" And they just came back, they came in from Nevada. And, uh, they walked into the kitchen, "Wow, what stinks?" And I started laughing 'cause I knew darn well she was gonna give 'em a lecture. She did. She sat 'em all around her, wacked 'em all, gave 'em a lecture. So, they had to sit there for the, the reason she did it was for the spirit. Cold, sickness mainly, and with that smell, I think if I was a spirit, I'd get out of the house too. I... <laughing>

EM: Did she cook traditional things at times?

MM: Yeah, at times, yeah, she would uh, make uh, acorn soup, or mush, I don't know, some people call it soup, some people call it mush. I prefer to just call it acorn. And she'd fix acorn. And she'd go outside, and she'd buy fish or she'd go fishing or something, and cooked fish right on the coals. And you learn to, you know, kinda appreciate it, even if it's got charcoal on it. I mean, you either ate it or you starved, and we ate it. <laughs> But, uh, she'd cook roots, she'd cook roots. She'd go down and get these fox tails, er lilies... She took lilies out of the ponds and stuff. And uh, what do you ca-, watercress. She'd boil that, and she'd mix it in the acorn and deer meat. Course she'd always try to get rab-, she, we ate rabbit, and deer meat. We couldn't eat bear because we were part of the bear family. Couldn't eat rattlesnake 'cause we're part of the snake family. And she'd have duck. She cooked duck on the spiket <spit>. Put a spiket in there, cook it outside. And it was good, it was good. I don't know. Something about it. And she'd go out and she'd gather berries from bushes and certain things. She'd spend a couple days out gathering. She'd be gone for a couple days. Just come back and she'd cook up whatever she brought in, and we ate it. We learned to love, you know, just love the natural taste of everything. Either that or starve, like I said.

EM: She was very determined then.

MM: Oh yeah. She was, hm... Actually I think she was hard-headed, but, you know... She, she was, she was determined to, you know, keep us educated, and, but still, have us get the education too, you know, from <inaudible> school and all...

EM: When did...

MM: She kept us cultured.

EM: When did your mother die?

MM: My mom passed away in '66.

EM: So, after that point, your grandmother raised you.

MM: Mm, hm. Well, I was, let's see, I was 16, well 16, 17, 18. And so I had to help raise my brothers and sisters. See there's, we had two families. There was my older brother, myself, and my younger brother. He was a year younger than I am. My older brother's five years older than me. And then, uh, my brothers and sisters, were, uh, there's a five years difference between my, uh, my brother and my sister and my other brothers, younger brothers. So, she had two families. And my older brother, when she passed away, my older brother was in the Marines. And so my grandmother and myself, we kinda got together to raise the other half. So, a lot of people often wonder, you know, "How come you know so much about raising families, and treating kids and all?" And I tell 'em, "I had to raise my brothers and sisters." Even to today, they'll still treat me like, well, they'll come to me and ask me for advice instead of some of the older, or even the aunts, they'll come to me.

EM: A few years after you took on this responsibility, you went into the service, right?

MM: Yeah. I went in the service in '67. No. Yeah! That's right.

EM: And where did you, where did you, were you stationed?

MM: I was stationed in, uh... I went to basic at Washington, Fort Lewis, Washington. Then I went to A.I.T. in Fort Lawton, Oklahoma. Then I went to Fort Benning, Georgia, to paratrooper training. And then from there, I went to Vietnam.

EM: Where in Vietnam?

MM: Central highlands. It was in, uh, Tuy Hòa, or An Kay (?), whatever you wanna, wherever I was at. But, uh...

EM: You were with what troop?

MM: I was with 173rd Airborne, attached with the 319th Artillery outfit. And when I got over there, after two months or so, they found out, or I found out that there was, uh, two other Indians in the bunch, in the outfit.

EM: How many in the outfit altogether?

MM: There was eleven of us, altogether. That was all. There were some that claimed they were Indian, but we, we kinda doubted it. So, anyway, they eventually put us all together, and made us a little fighting outfit, well, not a fighting outfit, but a, oh, little squad of our own, called us the Eagle Flag. And said they would us to go and check out certain areas, 'cause, you know, we all got along together. And, uh, they used to keep us away from towns too, 'cause, you know, the old story about a drunk Indian. They always, that's what they said, but, you know, we never caused trouble. And then I stayed there, I was there from '68 until '69.

EM: You said that you went on R & R to Japan?

MM: Yeah. That was, let me see, yeah, I went there in '68, yeah.

EM: But you didn't go to Australia?

MM: No. They had a color code. I was a little bit too dark. 'Course, all of us was dark over there. <laughs> You run around with no shirt on, you know, you get pretty dark. And, uh, one time I got sent to a village, because they thought that I was a Kit Carson Scout. Kit Carson Scout was a North Vietnamese, turned traitor. Not turned traitor, but, you know, uh, surrendered. And they because a scout to help the Vietnamese Army, and the American Army, and the Korean Army, find tunnels, and stuff like that.

EM: This was the main type of scout?

MM: Yes, this was a, a North Vietnamese.

EM: Any North Vietnamese who...

MM: Mm, hm, that came over and wanted to help, switched sides, and then they became a Kit Carson Scout.

EM: And they thought you were one?

MM: Yeah, they thought all of us Indians were that one time. And, let's see, I know, I went to one village. And they gave me ten PS's and ten pounds of rice, and told me to get on this chopper. And I figured, "Well, what the heck, why not go? I'll get a, you know, vacation." And then, these other two

guys, they got sent to this other chopper to another village. And, I think, the other guys, they got split up, with two going to one chopper and the other guy going to another chopper, to another village. So, they had to go out and look for this Eagle Flag Outfit, <laughs> which was in the village playing Vietnamese. They thought we were!

EM: They, who?

MM: The Americans.

EM: You mean, the commander?

MM: Well, not the commander. It was, uh, who was it, the uh, I guess you could call 'em commanders. I guess, the, uh, company commander of, uh, lower echelon, or whatever, that, you know, once you come off a flight, or off a, um, getting in the field or something like that, you know, you go to the airport, and on, certain Vietnamese outfits would be there, and you'd walk by, and they just took us for granted that we were the scouts with this Vietnamese outfit, and gave us our 10 PS's and 10 pounds of rice, and away we went. So, took 'em a week to find, figure out that we were gone. So, it was funny <laughs>. Then, the next thing you know, here comes some chopper, "Where's these Americans at?" Vietnamese people, we were having fun, playing baseball, you know. They were teaching us to make these little mats, and cooking and stuff like that. And, in turn I was showing them how, what Indians did, and stuff, making bow and arrows, and all. <laughs> Kids were running around shooting bows and arrows, and we made little necklaces, chokers and stuff like that. They, they, they liked it...

EM: Did that...

MM: They tried to hid me. They didn't want me to leave, so... It was funny. It was a lot of fun.

EM: Did you speak Vietnamese?

MM: I spoke a little bit, I don't, I didn't speak a lot. But most of 'em, they learned how to, uh, speak English a lot faster than you could speak Vietnamese, learn to speak Vietnamese. It was funny because some of it was French, French Vietnamese, and then there was, uh, yeah French Vietnamese, 'cause Frenchmen were there first. So, they were, you know, French orientated, then when the Americans came, then they were westernized, cowboy boots and all.

EM: So, they got your group back together? They rounded you all up, and...

MM: Yeah, they rounded us all up, and got us back together again. And then, uh, we stayed together until, I guess about a month before we were all supposed to go. And they put us in the rear echelon to pull guard duty. And none of us wanted to stay there. So we'd all sneak off, and get on the chopper, go back out in the field. And we'd meet up in the field somewhere. And, eventually they finally figured out, "Well, these guys don't want to come back to pull guard duty. Put 'em together and send 'em back out again." So, they did. So then, I guess it was two days before we were supposed to leave the company, er, the country. So, you were supposed to uh, ETS, or zero state (?), you were supposed to be in there two weeks prior. Well, two days prior to our time of leaving, they finally figured out that we were all supposed to be going home. And they came and got us. And we all ran and hid from 'em. We didn't really want to leave, but then we figured, "Ah, let's go home. It's time to go home." So we did. We all got home. Came home together. There's guys from Oklahoma, Utah, Washington, Minnesota, uh, Florida, New York, all the rest of the tribes.

EM: Were any of you guys decorated?

MM: Oh we got, some of us got citations, Purple Hearts, Bronze Stars, you know, some commendation medal. We all got decorated, now and then, for, uh, jobs to go out and do. Yeah, there was, but none of us got, we got, some of us got wounded. But none of us got wounded bad, now. You know, nobody lost a leg or a foot. Some of us might have lost some fat, and <laughs> a finger, maybe. But, you know, it was nothing real bad. I know myself and three other guys, we got, we had four concussions. But that wasn't nothing.

EM: So, when you came back, did you come back to Sacramento?

MM: Uh, well, when I left Vietnam, I was stationed at Paso Robles, at Camp Roberts. And I was with the experimental outfit there, for six months. Where they, we experimented on battle fatigue of soldiers and all, or personnel, put it that way. And they kept us up for fourteen days, day and night, and we had do any (?) tests, going out and sitting on a night scope, and, you know, that's what the experimental... and we were all Vietnam veterans. Veterans of Vietnam, and, uh, they wanted to see how we withstood everything, for fourteen days straight. And there was, there was another Indian, I met up with another Indian guy there too. And later on in life, when I got married to this Mono, it was his cousin that I married. And I didn't know that, until after we met. And, he looked at me. His name was Richard Lewis. And he looked at me and says, "I thought I got rid of you." And I said, "I thought I got rid of you too!" And my wife says, "Don't talk to my cousin like that." And I say, "Well, excuuuuse me!" And she just laughed, she said, "Where did you know him from?" I said, "I was in the service with him." He just looked at me, said, "Oh no, I gotta put up with you now?" And we just laughed. But, uh, this experimental unit, it was pretty good. And then when I got out, I came home, and it was kind of rough.

EM: Readjusting, you mean?

MM: Mm, hm. But my grandmother, she, she kinda helped me. Kept me busy.

EM: What was she doing during these years?

MM: What was she doing? She was still doing the Smoke Signals. She had a, oh, she was still taking care of kids. And, then she was still doing her FIC, and, then, volunteer work. That's what she called it. And a lot of people thought she was getting paid by BIA, but she wasn't.

EM: Never?

MM: Never. She never got anything from 'em. Not anything. Everything that she did was out of her pocket. She drove back, she drove her, she had a Volvo, a '62... She bought a Volvo when she got her license. And she drove across the United States, to see various Indian groups, 'bout four or five times, I think. She drove to Denver. She went up to Alaska to the National Congress, the American Indians Conference. And she drove back to New York. She'd take a plane. She went to Utah. She went to Minnesota. She went to every state in the United States. She's been to every state, put it that way. And she, her and her daughters, or her and her friends, this, this is after she was 63, you know. And, let's see, the last time she drove to, uh, New Orleans, her and her friend, Erma Bonsten. She was a Wintu Indian from Berny. They drove back to, uh, New Orleans, together. And, I remember them coming back, and they were laughing, and so we were talking about what happened and stuff. One time, my grandmother, she had a plate, you know, false teeth, and <laughs> she, uh, they went back into this town and they

couldn't find a motel room. There was no vacancies. And there was a bus behind this gas station, er, garage. And they asked the bus driver if they could sleep in the bus. And the guy in the garage said, "Sure, go ahead. It's a little dirty, but...", you know. They said, "That's alright. We just want to have a place to lay down and rest. You know, been driving for a while." So, they did. Next morning, they got up and my grandmother says, er, not my grandmother, yeah, my grandmother, and Erma, they both had false teeth. And they woke up, and Erma tried to figure out, "Where's my teeth at?" and my grandmother said the same thing. They thought they took 'em out, but they didn't. And they crawled around looking in their car, looking in all their suitcases. And, when they were crawling around in the bus, both of them on their hands and knees, crawling around, looking for their teeth, they looked at each other, went, "nnnn," pointed at their teeth and, "ah-ah-ah-ah, here they are." And they just laughed. But every time she went out, something funny would happen to her. And when she was in Alaska, at the National Congress, Conven-, Conference, she won two of the big fur coats on the raffle ticket. She bought one raffle ticket, violet I think, and the coats were worth \$600 a piece. And my aunt won a pair of, what is it, *muk-luks*? Yeah. And they had a, at the time they were up there, they had the Eskimo Olympics, or Alaskan Olympics, or is it, Eskimo, it's Eskimo Olympics. And they were, they had these, all these little games. They got to watch these women skin seals. The fastest one there was six seconds. Took her six seconds to skin a seal. It might have been faster than that. But they had guys that were hopping on their knuckles. You hopped until you couldn't hop no more. And I couldn't, they couldn't believe it. They were just something else (?). But she won the big one, two fur coats. And she was busy talking. As usual, she was talking with somebody. And my aunt says, "Well, look at your ticket to see if it's your number." And she said, "Well, here." She handed it to my aunt, and she said, "Here, you look at it, check it out." And they were saying, "Could we have ticket holder number holder such-and-such?" And my aunt says, "Grandma!", or "Mom, Mom, Mom!" And she was hollering real out loud, and everybody turned around, my grandma's too busy talking business with this guy or something. And she said, "You won! You won!" She says, "All right, go get it." And she didn't know she won. And just told her, "Well, go get it." And, you know, like, nothing to it. But when she came back, my grandmother says, "Oh my gosh, I won these?" These two coats, big old coats. They were nice too, warm and everything. They were real nice. And then, uh...

EM: Did she go back to Washington during this period?

MM: Uh, she had gone back to Washington... First time she went back to Washington was '36. I believe that was her and Bertha Stewart. They hitchhiked back there. Two ladies! I mean, they were, you know, they were, I guess they were in their 30's, close to middle-age. Maybe not. She might have been younger. Well anyway, they hitchhiked back to Washington D.C. And they had some bills or something that they wanted presented. And they talked to the various congressmen and senates, senators, and all. And, after that it was, you know, everything else was, uh, pretty good. They did go here and there and find out what was going on. And then they'd, they'd travel around to states, trying to present, uh, bills and help everybody, just to present their bills, and give Indians names, who to get in contact, you know. But she was, that was her thing, I guess. After coming to the Sacramento, I was saying (?), she saw so many Indians living in poverty, I guess, and wanted to help 'em. And that was her main thing. Which like, the house I lived in, the door was always open. And that's what they taught me. My mom did. And my grandmother, both. And whenever they, they'd go, believe it or not, when, where Old Sac is, they used to call that Skid Row. And they'd go down there and find Indians in bars, or, you know, some sleeping on the street corner. And they'd get a cab, you know, bring 'em home, wash 'em up, give 'em food. And

give 'em a couple dollars, and send 'em on their way. The main thing was that they, wouldn't matter about their wine or not, you know, gave 'em some clothes. And she always took donations of clothes too, you know, people that, you know, discarded clothes. And she'd take them and she'd go up to various Rancherias around here. She'd go up to Quincy, and up north, and take clothes. She did a survey on how many Indian children were in different areas, and find out which family needed what, and sizes. She'd take sizes of clothes, of the kids that needed some clothes for winter, for summer, and stuff. And she'd come home and she'd look through her, her rag box, or whatever you want to call it, you know. And she'd fix up a box and mail it to 'em. Or, either that or put it on a bus, and she'd call and tell 'em that it's on a bus, you know, "Pick up your clothes!" But just, it was her nature to help everybody.

EM: Did she have a good sense of humor?

MM: Yeah, she did. Sometimes. Not all the time, but sometimes.

EM: Was she very tall? Could you describe her?

MM: Well, she was about five foot. She was about five foot tall. Stocky. Uh...

EM: Did she walk fast or slow?

MM: Well, if she wanted to walk fast, she walked. When she wanted to walk slow, she walked slow. But she walked, you know, she'd walk everywhere. Well, but that's before she got her car, she walked everywhere. Or take the bus, or whatever. You know, nothing stopped her. She had her mind set to go and do something, she'd go and do it.

EM: She must have been very impressive then, to the various governors that she dealt with.

MM: Oh yeah, she, she was. And the thing that amazed me the most about her was that, with her eighth grade education and all. She'd stand there and talk, she could talk your ear off. I don't know where she'd find all this talk at. But, you know, she'd sit there, and she could confront a senator, a governor, congressperson, and it was amazing. She just, you know, if she said something wrong, she didn't care, as long as she said it. She was a really forward woman. Straightforward. And, uh, she was, you know, she wasn't afraid. And that's one thing, she said, "Never be afraid." If you get afraid, then, you know, there's no use in trying to do something, or this and that, or whatever. Whatever you're doing, don't be afraid to do it."

<Tape cuts off here>.